



In their own words: Young people's mental health in drought-affected rural and remote NSW

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Abstract:

Objective: To record the drought-related experiences of young people and to contrast these with their teachers' and other adults' observations. **Design:** Content analysis of issues and priorities raised in semistructured school-based forums. **Setting:** Rural schools in NSW centres. **Participants:** Young people, their teachers and service providers. **Intervention:** Six youth and community forums organised under the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program. **Results:** Participants welcomed increased community connectedness in response to prolonged drought but reported that drought's mental health impact was mainly negative. Adults observed children's distress, wondering if anyone else noticed it. They witnessed young people worrying about their families, increasingly isolated, at risk of harm, unable to obtain help and facing educational and employment limitations. Young people disclosed many mental health and relationship difficulties at school and at home. They worried about their families, communities and futures and about money and being isolated. **Conclusion:** Adults and young people reported similar effects of prolonged drought on young people's mental health. But, while adults were more concerned with risks to young people (of harm, abuse, homelessness, problems with the law and constrained opportunities), young people were simply overwhelmed, wanting help for their immediate worries. They sought coordinated support within schools, schools working together, more information about mental health and where to seek help for them and their friends, and support people who understood drought and rural circumstances and on whose discretion they could rely. Mental health programs that are developed in and for metropolitan contexts need to be adapted before being deployed in rural settings.

Source: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1440-1584.2011.01224.x>

Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change;
 surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Health Professional, Researcher



Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event

Extreme Weather Event: Drought

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Rural

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Australasia

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Mental Health/Stress

Mental Health Effect/Stress: Mood Disorder, Stress Disorder

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern:

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Children

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Resilience:

capacity of an individual, community, or institution to dynamically and effectively respond or adapt to shifting climate impact circumstances while continuing to function

A focus of content

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content